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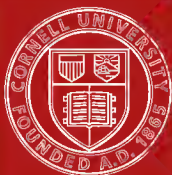
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OSCAR WILDE.

THE BEST OF OSCAR WILDE

Being a Collection of the BEST POEMS
and PROSE EXTRACTS of the writer



COLLECTED BY
OSCAR HERRMANN

EDITED BY
W. W. MASSEE

DRAWING BY
FREDERICK EHRLICH

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HELAS!

To drift with every passion till my soul
Is a stringed lute on which all winds can play ;
Is it for this that I have given away
Mine ancient wisdom, and austere control ?
Methinks my life is a twice written scroll
Scrawled over on some boyish holiday
With idle songs for pipe or virelay
Which do but mar the secret of the whole.
Surely there was a time I might have trod
The sunlit heights, and from life's dissonance
Struck one clear chord to reach the ears of God:
Is that time dead? lo ! with a little rod
I did but touch the honey of romance—
And must I lose a soul's inheritance ?

THE SPHINX.

THE SPHINX.

In a dim corner of my room,
 for longer than my fancy thinks,
A beautiful and silent Sphinx
 has watched me through the shifting gloom.
Inviolate and immobile
 she does not rise, she does not stir;
For silver moons are nought to her,
 and nought to her the suns that reel.
Red follows gray across the air,
 the waves of moonlight ebb and flow,
But with the dawn she does not go
 and in the night-time she is there.

~ Dawn follows Dawn, and Night grows old,
 and all the while this curious cat
Lies crouching on the Chinese mat
 with eyes of satin rimmed with gold. ~
Upon the mat she lies and leers,
 and on the tawny throat of her
Flutters the soft and silky fur,
 or ripples to her pointed ears.
Come forth my lovely seneschal,
 so somnolent, so statuesque,
Come forth you exquisite grotesque,
 half woman and half animal.

Come forth my lovely languorous Sphinx,
 and put your head upon my knee,
And let me stroke your throat and see
 your body spotted like the lynx,
And let me touch those curving claws
 of yellow ivory, and grasp
The tail that like a monstrous asp,
 coils round your heavy velvet paws.
A thousand weary centuries
 are thine, while I have hardly seen
Some twenty summers cast their green
 for autumn's gaudy liveries.

But you can read the Hieroglyphs
 on the great sandstone obelisks,
And you have talked with Basilisks,
 and you have looked on Hippogriffs.
O tell me, were you standing by
 when Isis to Osiris knelt,
And did you watch the Egyptian melt
 her union for Anthony,
And drink the jewel-drunken wine,
 and bend her head in mimic awe
To see the huge pro-consul draw
 the salted tunny from the brine?

And did you mark the Cyprian kiss
 white Adon on his catafalque,
And did you follow Amanalk
 the god of Heliopolis?

And did you talk with Thoth, and did
 you hear the moon-horned Io weep,
And know the painted kings who sleep
 beneath the wedge-shaped Pyramid?
Lift up your large black satin eyes
 which are like cushions where one sinks,
Fawn at my feet, fantastic Sphinx,
 and sing me all your memories.

Sing to me of the Jewish maid
 who wandered with the Holy Child,
And how you led them through the wild,
 and how they slept beneath your shade.
Sing to me of that odorous
 green eve when, crouching by the marge,
You heard from Adrian's gilded barge
 the laughter of Antinous,
And lapped the stream, and fed your drouth,
 and watched with hot and hungry stare
The ivory body of that rare young slave
 with his pomegranate mouth.

And the priests cursed you with shrill psalms
 as in your claws you seized their snake
And crept away with it to slake
 your passion by the shuddering palms.
Who were your lovers, who were they
 who wrestled for you in the dust?
Which was the vessel of your Lust,
 what Lemman had you every day?

Did giant lizards come and crouch
before you on the reedy banks?
Did Gryphons with great metal flanks
leap on you in your trampled couch?

Did monstrous hippopotami
come sidling to you in the mist?
Did gilt-scaled dragons writhe and twist
with passion as you passed them by?
And from the brick-built Lycian tomb
what horrible chimæra came
With fearful heads and fearful flame
to breed new wonders from your womb?

.

Or had you shameful secret guests
and did you harry to your home
Some Nereid coiled in amber foam
with curious rock-crystal breasts;
Or did you, treading through the froth,
call to the brown Sidonian
For tidings of Leviathan,
Leviathan or Behemoth?
Or did you when the sun was set,
climb up the cactus-covered slope
To meet your swarthy Ethiop
whose body was of polished jet?

Or did you while the earthen skiffs
dropt down the gray Nilotic flats

At twilight, and the flickering bats
 flew round the temple's triple glyphs,
Steal to the border of the bar
 and swim across the silent lake,
And slink into the vault and make
 the Pyramid your lupinar,
Till from each black sarcophagus
 rose up the painted, swathed dead,
Or did you lure unto your bed
 the ivory-horned Trageophos?

Or did the huge Apis from his car
 leap down and lay before your feet
Big blossoms of the honey-sweet
 and honey-colored nenuphar?

· · · · · · · ·
How subtle secret is your smile;
 did you love none then? nay I know
Great Ammon was your bedfellow,
 he lay with you beside the Nile.

The river-horses in the slime
 trumpeted when they saw him come
Odorous with Syrian galbanum
 and smeared with spikenard and with thyme.
He came along the river bank
 like some tall galley argent-sailed
He strode across the waters, mailed
 in beauty and the water sank.

He strode across the desert sand,
 he reached the valley where you lay,
He waited till the dawn of day,
 then touched your black breasts with his hand.

You kissed his mouth with mouth of flame,
 you made the horned god your own,
You stood behind him on his throne ;
 you called him by his secret name,
You whispered monstrous oracles
 into the caverns of his ears,
With blood of goats and blood of steers
 you taught him monstrous miracles.
While Ammon was your bedfellow
 your chamber was the steaming Nile
And with your curved, archaic smile
 you watched his passion come and go.

With Syrian oils his brows were bright
 and wide-spread as a tent at noon
His marble limbs made pale the moon
 and lent the day a larger light,
His long hair was nine cubits span
 and colored like that yellow gem
Which, hidden in their garments' hem,
 the merchants bring from Kurdistan.
His face was as the must that lies
 upon a vat of new-made wine,
The seas could not insapphirine
 the perfect azure of his eyes.

His thick, soft throat was white as milk
and threaded with thin veins of blue
And curious pearls like frozen dew
were broidered on his flowing silk.

On pearl and porphyry pedestalled
he was too bright to look upon
For on his ivory breast there shone
the wondrous ocean-emerald.

That mystic, moonlight jewel which
some diver of the Colchian caves
Had found beneath the blackening waves
and carried to the Colchian witch.
Before his gilded galiot
ran naked vine-wreathed corybants
And lines of swaying elephants
knelt down to draw his chariot,
And lines of swarthy Nubians
bore up his litter as he rode
Down the great granite-paved road,
between the nodding peacock fans.

The merchants brought him steatite
from Sidon, in their painted ships;
The meanest cup that touched his lips
was fashioned from a chrysolite.
The merchants brought him cedar chests
of rich apparel, bound with cords;

His train was borne by Memphian lords ;
 young kings were glad to be his guests.
Ten hundred shaven priests did bow
 at Ammon's altar day and night,
Ten hundred lamps did wave their light
 through Ammon's carven house,—and now

Foul snake and speckled adder with
 their young ones crawl from stone to stone
For ruined is the house, and prone
 the great rose-marble monolith ;
Wild ass or strolling jackal comes
 and crouches in the mouldering gates,
Wild satyrs call unto their mates
 across the fallen fluted drums.
And on the summit of the pile,
 the blue-faced ape of Horus sits
And gibbers, while the fig-tree splits
 the pillars of the peristyle.

• • • • • • • •
The god is scattered here and there ;
 deep hidden in the windy sand
I saw his giant granite hand
 still clinched in impotent despair.
And many a wandering caravan
 of stately negroes, silken-shawled,
Crossing the desert, halts appalled
 before the neck that none can span.
And many a bearded Bedouin
 draws back his yellow striped burnous

To gaze upon the Titan thews
of him who was thy paladin.

.

Go seek his fragments on the moor
and wash them in the evening dew,
And from their pieces make anew
thy mutilated paramour!

Go, seek them where they lie alone
and from their broken pieces make
Thy bruised bedfellow! and awake
mad passions in the senseless stone!
Charm his dull ear with Syrian hymns;
he loved your body: oh be kind!
Pour spikenard on his hair and wind
soft rolls of linen round his limbs;
Wind round his head the figured coins,
stain with red fruits the pallid lips;
Weave purple for his shrunken hips,
and purple for his barren loins!

Away to Egypt! Have no fear;
only one God has ever died,
Only one God has let His side
be wounded by a Soldier's spear.
But these, thy lovers, are not dead;
still by the hundred-cubit gate
Dog-faced Anubis sits in state
with lotus-lilies for thy head.

Still from his chair of porphyry
giant Memnon strains his lidless eyes
Across the empty land and cries
each yellow morning unto thee.

.

Back to your Nile! Or if you are
grown sick of dead divinities,

Follow some roving spoor
across the copper colored plain.
Reach out and hale him by the mane
and bid him be your paramour!
Couch by his side upon the grass
and set your white teeth in his throat,
And when you hear his dying note,
lash your long flanks of polished brass
And take a tiger for your mate
whose amber sides are flecked with black,
And ride upon his gilded back
in triumph through the Theban gate.

And toy with him in amorous jests,
and when he turns and snarls and gnaws,
Oh smite him with your jasper claws
and bruise him with your agate breasts!

.

Why are you tarrying? Get hence!
I weary of your sullen ways.

I weary of your steadfast gaze,
your somnolent magnificence.

Your horrible and heavy breath
makes the light flicker in the lamp,
And on my brow I feel the damp
and dreadful dews of night and death.

Your eyes are like fantastic moons
That shiver in some stagnant lake,

Your tongue is like a scarlet snake
that dances to fantastic tunes.

Your pulse makes poisonous melodies,
and your black throat is like the hole
Left by some torch or burning coal
on Saracenic tapestries.

Away! The sulphur-colored stars
are burning through the Western gate!

Away! Or it may be too late
to climb their silent silver cars!

See, the dawn shivers round the gray
gilt-dialed towers, and the rain
Streams down each diamoned pane
and blurs with tears the wannish day.

What snake-tressed fury, fresh from Hell,
with uncouth gestures and unclean,
Stole from the poppy-drowsy queen
and led you to a student's cell?

What songless, tongueless ghost of sin
crept through the curtains of the night

And saw my taper burning bright,
and knocked and bade you enter in?
Are there not others more accursed,
whiter with leprosy than I?
Are Abana and Pharpar dry,
that you come here to slake your thirst?

.

False Sphinx! False Sphinx! By reedy Styx
old Charon, leaning on his oar,
Waits for my coin. Go thou before
and leave me to my crucifix,
Whose pallid burden, sick with pain,
watches the world with wearied eyes,
And weeps for every soul that dies,
and weeps for every soul in vain.

.

PROSE EXTRACTS.

AN IDEAL HUSBAND.

Optimism begins in a broad grin, and Pessimism ends with blue spectacles. They are both of them merely poses.

The strength of women comes from the fact that psychology cannot explain us. Men can be analyzed, women merely adored.

London is too matrimonial. People are either hunting for husbands, or hiding from them.

Money that comes from a tainted source is a degradation.

No man should have a secret from his own wife. She invariably finds it out. Women have a wonderful instinct about things. They can discover everything except the obvious.

Life is never fair. And perhaps it is a good thing for most of us that it is not.

There is some flaw in each one of us.

Morality is simply the attitude we adopt towards people whom we personally dislike.

It is not the perfect but the imperfect who have need of love. It is when we are wounded by our own hands, or by the hands of others, that love should come to cure us—else what use is love at all.

If there were less sympathy in the world there would be less trouble in the world.

Women who have common sense are so curiously plain.

Women are never disarmed by compliments. Men always are.

There is only one tragedy in a woman's life. The fact that her past is always her lover, and her future invariably her husband.

If we men married the women we

deserved, we should have a very bad time of it.

How many men there are in modern life who would like to see their past burning to white ashes before them.

Women are not meant to judge men but to forgive them when they need forgiveness.

A woman who can keep a man's love and love him in return, has done all the world want of women, or should want of them.

Loveless marriages are horrible. But there is one thing worse than an absolutely loveless marriage,—a marriage in which there is love, but on one side only.

A WOMAN OF NO IMPORTANCE.

English women conceal their feelings till after they are married. They show them then.

Nothing should be out of reach of hope. Life is hope.

The young women of the present day seem to make it the sole object of their lives to be always playing with fire.

The one advantage with playing with fire is that one never gets even singed. It is the people who don't know how to play with it who get burned up.

One should sympathise with the joy, the beauty, the color of life. The less said about life's sores the better.

Curious thing plain women are always jealous of their husbands, beautiful women never are.

THE PORTRAIT OF MR. W. H.

Art is to a certain degree a mode of acting, an attempt to realize one's own personality on some imaginative plane out of the reach of the trammeling accidents and limitations of real life.

Freckles run in Scotch families just as gout does in English families.

It is always a silly thing to give advice, but to give good advice is absolutely fatal.

You forget that a thing is not necessarily true because a man dies for it.

For heaven's sake don't waste your time in a foolish attempt to discover a young Elizabethan actor who never existed and to make a phantom puppet the centre of the great cycle of Shakespere's Sonnets.

THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY.

There is only one thing in the world worse than being talked about, and that is not being talked about.

But beauty, (of the face) real beauty, ends where an intellectual expression begins. Intellect is in itself an exaggeration, and destroys the harmony of any face.

The one charm of marriage is that it makes a life of deception necessary for both parties.

Being natural is simply a pose, and the most irritating I know.

Every portrait that is painted with feeling is a portrait of the artist not of the sitter.

Lady Brandon treats her guests exactly as an auctioneer treats his goods. She either explains them

entirely away, or tells one everything about them except what one wants to know.

Conscience and cowardice are really the same things. Conscience is the trade name of the firm.

Laughter is not a bad beginning for a friendship and it is the best ending for one.

There is nothing that art cannot express.

The harmony of soul and body,—
how much that is!

It is a sad thing to think about, but there is no doubt that Genius lasts longer than Beauty.

Poets are not so scrupulous. They know how useful passion is for publication. Nowadays a broken heart will run to many editions

The worst of having a romance is that it leaves one so unromantic.

Those who are faithful know only the pleasures of love; it is the faithless who know love's tragedies.

One's own soul, and the passions of one's friends,—those are the fascinating things of life.

The aim of life is self-development. To realize one's nature perfectly, that is what each of us is here for.

The terror of society which is the basis of morals, the terror of God, which is the secret of religion,—these are the two things that govern us.

The only way to get rid of a temptation is to yield to it.

The true mystery of the world is the visible, not the invisible.

Women spoil every romance by trying to make it last forever.

(People) try to look picturesque, but only succeed in being untidy.

I like Wagner's music better than any other music. It is so loud that

people can talk the whole time without people hearing what one says.

I never talk during music,—at least good music. If one hears bad music, it is one's duty to drown it by conversation.

Men marry because they are tired; women, because they are curious; both are disappointed.

People who only love once in their lives are only shallow people. What they call their loyalty, and their fidelity, I call lethargy of custom or the lack of the imagination. Faithlessness is to the emotional life what consistency is to the intellectual life,—simply a confession of failure.

The longer I live, the more keenly I feel that whatever was good enough for our fathers was not good enough for us.

When one is in love one always begins by deceiving one's self and one always ends by deceiving others. That is what the world calls romance.

The only artists I have ever known who are personally delightful are bad artists. Good artists give everything to their art, and consequently are perfectly uninteresting in themselves.

A cigarette is the perfect type of a perfect pleasure. It is exquisite, and it leaves one unsatisfied.

There are only two kinds of people who are really fascinating,—people who know absolutely everything, and people who know absolutely nothing.

The secret of remaining young is never to have an emotion that is unbecoming.

There is always something ridiculous about the passions of people whom one has ceased to love.

We live in an age when only unnecessary things are absolutely necessary to us.

There is a luxury in self-reproach. When we blame ourselves we feel

that no one else has a right to blame us. It is the confession, not the priest, that gives us absolution.

Women never know when the curtain has fallen. They always want a sixth act, and as soon as the interest of the play is entirely over they propose to continue it.

Taking some one else's admirer when one loses one's own. In good society that always whitewashes a woman.

Is insincerity such a terrible thing? It is merely a method by which we can multiply our personalities.

LORD ARTHUR SAVILLE'S CRIME.

A STUDY OF DUTY.

The inordinate passion for pleasure is the secret of remaining young.

But surely that is tempting Providence. Surely Providence can resist temptation by this time.

The proper basis of marriage is misunderstanding.

Are we not better than chessmen, moved by an unseen power, vessels the potter fashions at his fancy, for honor or for shame.

Most men and women are forced to perform parts for which they have no qualifications. The world is a stage, but the play is badly cast.

Many men prefer the primrose path of alliance to the steep heights of duty.

True romance is not killed by reality.

INTENTIONS.

Mr. Hall Caine aims at the grandiose, but then he writes at the top of his voice. He is so loud that one cannot hear what he says.

Thinking is the most unhealthy thing in the world and people die of it just as they die of any other disease.

One touch of Nature may make the whole world akin, but two touches of Nature will destroy any work of Art.

Art itself is really a form of exaggeration; and selection, which is the very spirit of Art, is nothing more than an intensified mode of over emphasis.

The only real people are the people who never existed. . . .

Literature always anticipates life. It does not copy it, but moulds it to its purpose.

Personal experience (in art) is a most vicious and limited circle.

No real artist ever sees things as they really are.

All bad art comes from returning to Life and Nature. The moment Art surrenders its imaginative medium it surrenders everything.

All beautiful things belong to the same age.

Sin should be solitary and have no accomplices.

To be suggestive for fiction is to be of more importance than a fact.

In literature mere egotism is delightful.

When people talk to us about others they are usually dull. When they talk to us about themselves they are nearly always interesting, and if one could shut them up when they become wearisome, as easily as one can shut up a book of which one has

grown wearied, they would be perfect absolutely.

Formerly we used to canonize our heroes. The modern method is to vulgarize them.

After playing Chopin, I feel as if I had been weeping over sins I had never committed, and mourning over tragedies that were not my own. Music always seems to me to produce that effect. It creates for one a past of which one has been ignorant, and fills one with a sense of sorrows that have been hidden from one's tears. I can fancy a man who has led a perfectly common-place life, hearing by chance some curious piece of music, and suddenly discovering that his soul, without his being conscious of it, had passed through terrible experiences, and known fearful joys, or wild romantic loves, or great renunciations.

In the best days of art there were no art critics.

Learned conversation is either the affectation of the ignorant or the

profession of the mentally unemployed.

Education is an admirable thing, but it is well to remember from time to time that nothing that is worth knowing can be taught.

The accusations of plagiarism are endless, and such accusations proceed either from the thin colourless lips of impotence, or from the grotesque mouths of those who, possessing nothing of their own, fancy that they can gain reputation for wealth by crying out that they have been robbed.

Cigarettes have at least the charm of leaving one unsatisfied.

Mediocrity weighing mediocrity in the balance, and incompetence applauding its brother—that is the spectacle which the artistic activity of England affords us from time to time.

The one duty we owe to history is to re-write it.

If we lived long enough to see the results of our actions it may be that those who call themselves good would be sickened with a dull remorse, and those whom the world calls evil stirred by a noble joy.

Self-denial is simply a method by which man arrests his progress, and self-sacrifice a survival of the mutilation of the savage.

When a man acts he is a puppet.
When he describes he is a poet.

Dulness is always an irresistible temptation for brilliancy.

The highest criticism is really a record of one's own soul.

One may appeal from fiction unto fact. But from the soul there is no appeal.

Music can never reveal its ultimate secret.

Life is terribly deficient in form. Its catastrophes happen in the wrong

way and to the wrong people. There is a grotesque horror about its comedies, and its tragedies seem to culminate in farce.

Life! Life! Don't let us go to life for our fulfilment (in Art) or our experience. It is a thing narrowed by circumstances, incoherent in its utterance. It makes us pay too high a price for its wares, and we purchase the meanest of its secrets at a cost that is monstrous and infinite.

(Heredity) is wiser than we are, and its wisdom is bitter. It fills us with impossible desires, and makes us follow what we know we cannot gain.

What we want (in Art) are unpractical people who see beyond the moment, and think beyond the day.

It is so easy for people to have sympathy with suffering. It is so difficult for them to have sympathy for thought.

It is so easy to convert others. It is so difficult to convert oneself.

One tires, in the end, of the work of individuals whose individuality is always noisy, and generally uninteresting.

People sometimes say that fiction is getting too morbid. As far as psychology is concerned it has never been morbid enough.

We teach people how to remember we never teach them how to grow.

There is one thing worse than Injustice, and that is Justice without her sword in her hand. When Right is not Might, it is Evil.

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST.

When one is in town one amuses oneself. When one is in the country one amuses other people.

The very essence of romance is uncertainty. If ever I get married, I'll certainly try to forget the fact.

Girls never marry the men they flirt with. Girls don't think it right.

More than half of modern culture depends on what one shouldn't read.

Nothing annoys people so much as not receiving invitations.

In married life three is company and two is none.

I do not approve of the modern sympathy with invalids. I consider it morbid. Illness of any kind is hardly a thing to be encouraged in others. Health is the primary duty of life.

If one plays good music people don't listen, and if one plays bad music people don't talk.

A man who desires to get married should know either everything or nothing.

Relations are a pack of people who haven't got the remotest knowledge of how to live, nor the smallest instinct about when to die.

All women become like their mothers. That is their tragedy. No man does. That's his.

The only way to behave to a woman is to make love to her, if she is pretty, and to some one else if she is plain.

I am not in favor of long engagements. They give people the opportunity of finding out each others character before marriage, which I think is never advisable.

No woman should be ever quite accurate about her age. It looks so calculating.

One should never trust a woman who tells one her real age. A woman who would tell one that, would tell one anything.

What do you call a bad man? The sort of a man who admires innocence.

What do you call a bad woman? The sort of a woman a man never gets tired of.

Define woman as a sex. They are sphinxes without secrets.

The soul is born old but grows young. That is the comedy of life. The body is born young but grows old. That is life's tragedy.

My husband is a sort of promissory note; I am tired of meeting him.

Life is simply a *mauvais quart d'heure* made up of exquisite moments.

Men always want to be a woman's first love. That is their clumsy vanity. We women have a more

subtle instinct about things. What we like is to be a man's last romance.

How can a woman expect to be happy with a man who insists on treating her as if she were a perfectly rational being?

If a man and woman have sinned, let them both go forth into the desert to love or loathe each other there. Let them both be branded, but don't punish the one and let the other go free. Don't have one law for men and another for women.

When a man is old enough to do wrong, he should be old enough to do right also.

Duty is what one expects from others, it is not what one does one's-self.

Discontent is the first step in the progress of a man or a nation.

To get into the best society, now-a-days, one has either to feed people, amuse people, or shock people—that is all.

Men marry because they are tired;
women because they are curious.
Both are disappointed.

The only difference between the
saint and the sinner is that every
saint has a past, and every sinner
has a future.

Men know life too early; women
know life too late. That is the
difference between men and women.

LADY WINDERMERE'S FAN.

Now-a-days we are all of us so hard up, that the only pleasant things to pay are compliments. They're the only things we *can* pay.

I don't like compliments, and I don't see why a man should think he is pleasing a woman enormously when he says to her a whole heap of things that he does'nt mean.

If you pretend to be good, the world takes you very seriously. If you pretend to be bad, it doesn't. Such is the astounding stupidity of criticism.

She taught me, what the world is forgetting, the difference that there is between what is right and what is wrong.

Now-a-days people seem to look on life as a speculation. It is not a speculation. It is a sacrament. It's

ideal is love. It's purification is sacrifice.

Because the husband is vile—
should the wife be vile also?

It is absurd to divide people into good and bad. People are either charming or tedious.

Some people can resist everything except temptation.

Our husbands would really forget our existence if we didn't nag at them from time to time, just to remind them that we have a perfect legal right to do so.

It is a curious thing about the game of marriage—a game, by the way, which is going out of fashion—the wives hold all the honors, and invariably lose the odd trick.

It is a dangerous thing to reform anyone.

Men become old but they never become good.

Crying is the refuge of plain women, but the ruin of pretty ones.

It is strange that men who love and who teach their wives to love, should pass from the love that is given to the love that is bought.

Misfortunes one can endure—they come from the outside, they are accidents. But to suffer for one's own faults—Ah! There is the sting of life.

If a woman really repents, she never wishes to return to the society that has made or seen her ruin.

How hard good women are!
How weak bad men are!

My experience is that as soon as people are old enough to know better, they don't know anything at all.

It's most dangerous for a husband to pay any attentions to his wife in public. It always makes people

think that he beats her when they're alone.

London is full of women who trust their husbands. One can always recognize them. They look so thoroughly unhappy.

Some women look like an *edition de luxe* of a wicked French novel, meant specially for the English market.

It takes a thoroughly good woman to do a thoroughly stupid thing.

A man can't tell mean things about another man.

Between men and women there is no friendship possible. There is passion, enmity, worship, love, but no friendship.

There are moments when one has to choose between living one's own life, fully, entirely, completely—or dragging out some false, shallow, degrading existence that the world in its hypocrisy demands.

Windermere knows that nothing looks so much like innocence as an indiscretion.

There is a great deal of good in Lord Augustus. Fortunately it is all on the surface. Just where good qualities should be.

With a proper background women can do anything.

When men give up saying what is charming they give up thinking what is charming.

If a women wants to hold a man she has merely to appeal to what is worst in him. We make gods of men and they leave us. Others make brutes of them and they fawn and are faithful.

Men are such cowards. They outrage every law of the world, and are afraid of the world's tongue.

You don't know what it is to fall in the pit and all the while to

hear the laughter, the fearful laughter of the world, a thing more tragic than all the tears the world has ever shed.

One pays for one's sin, and then one pays again, and all one's life one pays.

Wicked women bother one. Good women bore one. That's the only difference between them.

What is the difference between scandal and gossip? Gossip is charming; but scandal is gossip made tedious by morality.

How marriage ruins a man! It's as demoralizing as cigarettes, and far more expensive.

Women like to find us (men) irretrievably bad, and to leave us quite unattractively good.

In this world there are only two tragedies. One is not getting what one wants, and the other is getting. The last is a real tragedy.

What is a cynic? A man who knows the price of everything, and the value of nothing.

A sentimentalist is a man who sees an absurd value in everything, and doesn't know the market price of any single thing.

Experience is the name everyone gives to their mistakes.

If one really loves a woman, all other women in the world become absolutely meaningless to him. Love changes one.

There is a bitter irony in things, a bitter irony in the way we talk of good and bad women.

What a pity in life that we get our lessons when they are of no use to us.

Actions are the first tragedy in life, words are the second. Words are perhaps the worst. Words are merciless.

People cannot be divided into the good and the bad, as though they

were two separate races or creations. What are called good women may have terrible things in them, mad mood of recklessness, assertion, jealousy, sin. Bad women, as they are termed, may have in them sorrow, repentance, pity, sacrifice.

(When one has sinned) what consoles one now-a-days is not repentance, but pleasure. Repentance is quite out of date.

Ideals are dangerous things. Realities are better. They wound, but they are better.

Love is easily killed.

There is the same world for all of us, and good and evil, sin and innocence, go through it hand in hand. To shut one's eyes to half of life that one may live securely is as though one blinded one's self that one might walk with more safety in a land of pit and precipice.

THE BALLAD OF
READING
GAOL.

THE BALLAD OF READING GAOL.

He did not wear his scarlet coat,
For blood and wine are red,
And blood and wine were on his hands
When they found him with the dead,
The poor dead woman whom he loved,
And murdered in her bed.

He walked amongst the Trial Men
In a suit of shabby gray;
A cricket cap was on his head,
And his step seemed light and gay;
But I never saw a man who looked
So wistfully at the day.

I never saw a man who looked
With such a wistful eye
Upon that little tent of blue
Which prisoners call the sky,
And at every drifting cloud that went
With sails of silver by.

I walked with other souls in pain,
Within another ring,
And was wondering if the man had done
A great or little thing,
When a voice behind me whispered low
“*That fellow’s got to swing.*”

.



Yet each man kills the thing he loves,
By each let this be heard:
Some do it with a bitter look,
Some with a flattering word;
The coward does it with a kiss,
The brave man with a sword!

Some kill their love when they are young,
And some when they are old;
Some strangle with the hands of Lust,
Some with the hands of Gold:
The kindest use a knife, because
The dead so soon grow cold.

Some love too little, some too long,
Some sell, and others buy;
Some do the deed with many tears,
And some without a sigh:
For each man kills the thing he loves,
Yet each man does not die.

.

He does not sit with silent men
Who watch him night and day;
Who watch him when he tries to weep,
And when he tries to pray;
Who watch him lest himself should rob
The prison of its prey.

.

He does not rise in piteous haste
And put on convict clothes,
While some coarse-mouthed Doctor
gloats and notes
Each new and nerve-twitched pose,
Fingering a watch whose little ticks
Are like horrible hammer-blows.

He does not know that sickening thirst
That sands one's throat, before
The hangman with his gardener's gloves
Slips through the padded door,
And binds one with three leathern thongs
That the throat may thirst no more.

.

He does not stare upon the air
Through a little roof of glass;
He does not pray with lips of clay
For his agony to pass;
Nor feel upon his shuddering cheek
The kiss of Caiaphas.

.

II.

I never saw a man who looked
With such a wistful eye
Upon that little tent of blue
Which prisoners call the sky,

And at every wandering cloud that trailed
Its ravelled fleeces by.

.

He did not wring his hands or weep,
Nor did he peek or pine,
But he drank the air as though it held
Some healthful anodyne ;
With open mouth he drank the sun
As though it had been wine !

.



For the oak and elm have pleasant leaves
That in the spring-time shoot :
But grim to see is the gallows-tree,
With its adder-bitten root,
And green or dry a man must die
Before it bears its fruit !

The loftiest place is that seat of grace
For which all worldlings try ;
But who would stand in hempen band
Upon a scaffold high,
And through a murderer's collar take
His last look at the sky ?

It is sweet to dance to violins
When Love and Life are fair :
To dance to flutes, to dance to lutes
Is delicate and rare :

But it is not sweet with nimble feet
To dance upon the air!

.

III.

In Debtor's Yard the stones are hard
And the dripping wall is high,
So it was there he took the air
Beneath the ~~leaden~~ sky,
And by each side a Warder walked,
For fear the man might die.

Or else he sat with those who watched
His anguish night and day;
Who watched him when he rose to weep,
And when he crouched to pray;
Who watched him lest himself should rob
Their scaffold of its prey.

.

We sewed the sacks, we broke the stones,
We turned the dusty drill:
We banged the tins, and bawled the hymns,
And sweated on the mill:
And in the heart of every man
Terror was lying still.

So still it lay that every day
Crawled like a weed-clogged wave:
And we forgot the bitter lot
That waits for fool and knave,
Till once, as we tramped in from work,
We passed an open grave.

With yawning mouth the yellow hole
Gaped for a living thing;
The very mud cried out for blood
To the thirsty asphalt ring:
And we knew that ere one dawn grew fair
Some prisoner had to swing.

.



That night the empty corridors
Were full of forms of Fear,
And up and down the iron town
Stole feet we could not hear,
And through the bars that hide the stars
White faces seemed to peer.

He lay as one who lies and dreams
In a pleasant meadow-land,
The watchers watched him as he slept,
And could not understand
How one could sleep so sweet a sleep
With a hangman close at hand.

.

The gray cock crew, the red cock crew,
But never came the day :
And crooked shapes of Terror crouched,
In the corners where we lay :
And each evil sprite that walked by night
Before us seemed to play.

They glided past, they glided fast,
Like travelers through a mist :
They mocked the moon in a rigadoon
Of delicate turn and twist,
And with a formal pace and loathsome grace
The phantoms kept their tryst.

.



The morning wind began to moan,
But still the night went on :
Through its giant loom the web of gloom
Crept till each thread was spun :
And, as we prayed, we grew afraid
Of the Justice of the Sun.

.

At last I saw the shadowed bars,
Like a lattice wrought in lead,
Move right across the whitewashed wall
That faced my three-plank bed,
And I knew that somewhere in the world
God's dreadful dawn was red.

.

He did not pass in purple pomp,
Nor ride a moon-white steed.
Three yards of cord and a sliding board
Are all the gallows need,
So with a rope of shame the Herald came
To do the secret deed.

.

We waited for the stroke of eight :
Each tongue was thick with thirst :
For the stroke of eight is the stroke of Fate
That makes a man accursed,
And Fate will use a running noose
For the best man and the worst.

.

With sudden shock the prison clock
Smote on the shivering air,
And from all the gaol rose up a wail
Of impotent despair,
Like the sound that frightened marshes hear
From some leper in his lair.

And as one sees most fearful things
In the crystal of a dream,
We saw the greasy hempen rope
Hooked to the blackened beam,
And heard the prayer the hangman's snare
Strangled into a scream.

.

IV.

I never saw sad men who looked
 With such a wistful eye
Upon that little tent of blue
 We prisoners call the sky,
And at every careless cloud that passed
 In happy freedom by.

.

For he who sins a second time
 Wakes a dead soul to pain,
And draws it from its spotted shroud,
 And makes it bleed again,
And makes it bleed great goutts of blood,
 And makes it bleed in vain!

.



The Warders strutted up and down,
 And kept their herd of brutes,
Their uniforms were spick and span,
 And they wore their Sunday suits,
But we knew the work they had been at,
 By the quicklime on their boots.

For where a grave had opened wide,
 There was no grave at all:
Only a stretch of mud and sand
 By the hideous prison-wall,
And a little heap of burning lime,
 That the man should have his pall.

For he has a pall, this wretched man,
Such as few men can claim :
Deep down below a prison-yard,
Naked for greater shame,
He lies with fetters on each foot,
Wrapped in a sheet of flame.

And all the while the burning lime
Eats flesh and bone away ;
It eats the brittle bone by night,
And the soft flesh by day,
It eats the flesh and bone by turns,
But it eats the heart away.



For three long years they will not sow
Or root or seedling there :
For three long years the unblessed spot
Will sterile be and bare,
And look upon the wondering sky
With unreproachful stare.

They think a murderers heart would taint
Each simple seed they sow.
It is not true ! God's kindly earth
Is kindlier than men know,
And the red rose would but blow more red,
And the white rose whiter blow.

Out of his mouth a red, red rose !
Out of his heart a white !

For who can say by what strange way,
Christ brings his will to light,
Since the barren staff the pilgrim bore
Bloomed in the great Pope's sight?

But neither milk-white rose nor red
May bloom in prison air;
The shard, the pebble, and the flint,
Are what they give us there:
For flowers have been known to heal
A common man's despair.

So never will wine-red rose or white,
Petal by petal, fall
On that stretch of mud and sand that lies
By the hideous prison wall,
To tell the men who tramp the yard
That God's Son died for all.



The Chaplain would not kneel to pray
By his dishonored grave;
Nor mark it with that blessed Cross
That Christ for sinners gave,
Because the man was one of those
Whom Christ came down to save.

Yet all is well: he has but passed
To life's appointed bourne,
And alien tears will fill for him

Pity's long-broken urn,
For his mourners will be outcast men,
And outcasts always mourn.

.

V.

I know not whether Laws be right,
Or whether Laws be wrong;
All that we know who lie in gaol
Is that the wall is strong;
And that each day is like a year,
A year whose days are long.

With midnight always in one's heart,
And twilight in one's cell,
We turn the crank, or tear the rope,
Each in his separate Hell,
And the silence is more awful far
Than the sound of a brazen bell.

.

And thus we rust Life's iron chain
Degraded and alone:
And some men curse, and some men weep,
And some men make no moan:
But God's eternal Laws are kind
And break the heart of stone.

.



Ah! happy they whose heart can break
And peace of pardon win!
How else may man make straight his plan
And cleanse his soul from Sin?
How else but through a broken heart
May Lord Christ enter in?

And he of the swollen purple throat,
And the stark and staring eyes;
Waits for the holy hands that took
The Thief to Paradise;
And a broken and a contrite heart
The Lord will not despise.

.

VI.

In Reading gaol by Reading town
There is a pit of shame,
And in it lies a wretched man
Eaten by teeth of flame,
In a burning winding-sheet he lies,
And his grave has got no name,

And there, till Christ call forth the dead,
In silence let him lie:
No need to waste the foolish tear,
Or heave the windy sigh:
The man has killed the thing he loved,
And so he had to die.

And all men kill the' thing they love,
By all let this be heard,
Some do it with a bitter look,
Some with a flattering word.
The coward does it with a kiss,
The brave man with a sword!

SHORT POEMS.

AVE IMPERATRIX.

Set in this stormy Northern sea,
Queen of these restless fields of tide,
England! what shall men say of thee,
Before whose feet the worlds divide?

The earth, a brittle globe of glass,
Lies in the hollow of thy hand,
And through its heart of crystal pass,
Like shadows through a twilight land,

The spears of crimson suited war,
The long white-crested waves of fight,
And all the deadly fires which are
The torches of the lords of Night.

The yellow leopards, strained and lean,
The treacherous Russian knows so well,
With gaping blackened jaws are seen
Leap through the hail of screaming shell.

The strong sea-lion of England's wars
Hath left his sapphire cave of sea,
To battle with the storm that mars
The star of England's chivalry.

.

O lonely Himalayan height,
Gray pillar of the Indian sky,
Where saw'st thou last in clanging fight,
Our wingèd dogs of Victory?

.

And that dread city of Cabool
Set at the mountain's scarpèd feet,
Whose marble tanks are ever full
With water for the noonday heat:

.

Here have our wild war-eagles flown,
And flapped wide wings in fiery fight;
But the sad dove, that sits alone
In England—she hath no delight.

In vain the laughing girl will lean
To greet her love with love-lit eyes:
Down in some treacherous black ravine,
Clutching his flag, the dead boy lies.

And many a moon and sun will see
The lingering wistful children wait
To climb upon their father's knee;
And in each house made desolate

Pale women who have lost their lord
Will kiss the relics of the slain—
Some tarnished epaulet—some sword—
Poor toys to soothe such anguished pain.

For not in quiet English fields
Are these, our brothers, lain to rest,
Where we might deck their broken shields
With all the flowers the dead love best.

For some are by the Delhi walls,
And many in the Afghan land,
And many where the Ganges falls
Through seven months of shifting sand.

And some in Russian waters lie,
And others in the seas which are
The portals to the East, or by
The wind-swept heights of Trafalgar.

O wandering graves! O restless sleep!
O silence of the sunless day!
O still ravine! O stormy deep!
Give up your prey! Give up your prey!

And thou whose wounds are never healed,
Whose weary race is never won,
O Cromwell's England! must thou yield
For every inch of ground a son?

Go! crown with thorns thy gold-crowned head,
Change thy glad song to song of pain;
Wind and wild wave have got thy dead,
And will not yield them back again.

Wave and wild wind and foreign shore
Possess the flower of English land—
Lips that thy lips shall kiss no more,
Hands that shall never clasp thy hand.

What profit now that we have bound
The whole round world with nets of gold,
If hidden in our heart is found
The care that groweth never old?

What profit that our galleys ride,
Pine-forest-like, on every main?
Ruin and wreck are at our side,
Grim warders of the House of pain.

Where are the brave, the strong, the fleet?
Where is our English chivalry?
Wild grasses are their burial-sheet,
And sobbing waves their threnody.

O loved ones lying far away,
What word of love can dead lips send!
O wasted dust! O senseless clay!
Is this the end! is this the end!

Peace, peace! we wrong the noble dead
To vex their solemn slumber so:
Though childless, and with thorn-crowned head,
Up the steep road must England go.

Yet when this fiery web is spun,
Her watchmen shall descry from far
The young Republic like a sun
Rise from these crimson seas of war.

LIBERTATIS SACRA FAMES.

Albeit nurtured in democracy
And liking best that state republican
Where every man is King-like and no man
Is crowned above his fellows, yet I see,
Spite of this modern fret for Liberty,
Better the rule of One whom all obey,
Than to let clamorous demagogues betray
Our freedom with the kiss of anarchy.
Wherefore I love them not whose hands profane
Plant the red flag on the piled-up street
For no right cause, beneath whose ignorant reign
Arts, Culture, Reverence, Honor, all things fade,
Save treason and the dagger of her trade,
And Murder with his silent bloody feet.

THE GARDEN OF EROS.

It is full summer now, the heart of June,
Not yet the sun-burnt reapers are astir
Upon the upland meadow where too soon
Rich autumn time, the season's usurer,
Will lend his hoarded gold to all the trees,
And see his treasure scattered by the wild and
spendthrift breeze.

.

Spirit of Beauty! tarry still a-while,
They are not dead, thine ancient votaries,
Some few there are to whom thy radiant smile
Is better than a thousand victories,
Though all the nobly slain in Waterloo
Rise up in wrath against them! tarry still, there
are a few,

Who for thy sake would give their manlihood
And consecrate their being, I at least
Have done so, made thy lips my daily food,
And in thy temples found a goodlier feast
Than this starved age can give me, spite of all
Its new-found creeds so skeptical and so
dogmatical.

.

Yet tarry! for the boy who loved thee best,
Whose very name should be a memory
To make thee linger, sleeps in silent rest
Beneath the Roman walls, and melody
Still mourns her sweetest lyre, none can play
The lute of Adonais, with his lips Song passed
away.

Nay, when Keats died the Muses still had left
One silver voice to sing his threnody,
But ah! too soon of it we were bereft
When on that riven night and stormy sea
Panthea claimed her singer as her own,
And slew the mouth that praised her; since which
time we walk alone,

Save for that fiery heart, that morning star
Of re-arisen England, whose clear eye
Saw from our tottering throne and waste of war
The grand Greek limbs of young Democracy
Rise mightily like Hesperus and bring
The great Republic! him at least thy love hath
taught to sing,

And he hath been with thee at Thessaly,
And seen white Atalanta fleet of foot
In passionless and fierce virginity
Hunting the tuskèd boar, his honeyed lute
Hath pierced the cavern of the hollow hill,
And Venus laughs to know one knee will bow
before her still.

And he hath kissed the lips of Proserpine,
And sung the Galilæan's requiem,
That wounded forehead dashed with blood and
wine

He hath discrowned, the Ancient Gods in him
Have found their last, most ardent worshiper,
And the new Sign grows gray and dim before its
conqueror.

Spirit of Beauty! tarry with us still,
It is not quenched the torch of poesy,
The star that shook above the Eastern hill
Holds unassailed its argent armory
From all the gathering gloom and fretful fight—
O tarry with us still! for through the long and
common night,

Morris, our sweet and simple Chaucer's child,
Dear heritor of Spenser's tuneful reed,
With soft and sylvan pipe has oft beguiled
The weary soul of man in troublous need,
And from the far and flowerless fields of ice
Has brought fair flowers meet to make an earthly
paradise.

We know them all, Gudrun the strong men's bride,
Aslaug and Olafson we know them all,
How giant Grettir fought and Sigurd died,
And what enchantment held the king in thrall

When lonely Brynhild wrestled with the powers
That war against all passion, ah! how oft through
summer hours.

Long listless summer hours when the noon
Being enamored of a damask rose
Forgets to journey westward, till the moon
The pale usurper of its tribute grows
From a thin sickle to a silver shield
And chides its loitering car—how oft, in some
cool grassy field

Far from the cricket-ground and noisy eight
At Bagley, where the rustling bluebells come
Almost before the blackbird finds a mate
And overstay the swallow, and the hum
Of many murmuring bees flits through the leaves,
Have I lain poring on the dreamy tales his fancy
weaves,

And through their unreal woes and mimic pain
Wept for myself, and so was purified,
And in their simple mirth grew glad again;
For as I sailed upon that pictured tide
The strength and splendor of the storm was mine
Without the storm's red ruin, for the singer is
divine,

The little laugh of water falling down
Is not so musical, the clammy gold

Close hoarded in the tiny waxen town
Has less of sweetness in it, and the old
Half-withered reeds that waved in Arcady
Touched by his lips break forth again to fresher
harmony.

Spirit of Beauty tarry yet awhile!

Although the cheating merchants of the mart
With iron roads profane our lovely isle,
And break on whirling wheels the limbs of Art,
Ay! though the crowded factories beget
The blind-worm Ignorance that slays the soul,
O tarry yet!

For One at least there is,—He bears his name
From Dante and the seraph Gabriel—
Whose double laurels burn with deathless flame
To light thine altar; He too loves thee well
Who saw old Merlin lured in Vivien's snare,
And the white feet of angels coming down the
golden stair,

Loves thee so well, that all the World for him
A gorgeous-colored vestiture must wear,
And Sorrow take a purple diadem,
Or else be no more Sorrow, and Despair
Gild its own thorns, and Pain, like Adon, be
Even in anguish beautiful;—such is the empery

Which Painters hold, and such the heritage
This gentle solemn Spirit doth possess,
Being a better mirror of his age
In all his pity, love, and weariness,
Than those who can but copy common things,
And leave the Soul unpainted with its mighty
questionings.

But they are few, and all romance has flown,
And men can prophesy about the sun,
And lecture on his arrows—how, alone,
Through a waste void the soulless atoms run,
How from each tree its weeping nymph has fled,
And that no more 'mid English reeds a Naiad
shows her head.

Methinks these new Actæons boast too soon
That they have spied on beauty; what if we
Have analyzed the rainbow, robbed the moon
Of her most ancient, chastest mystery,
Shall I, the last Endymion, lose all hope
Because rude eyes peer at my mistress through a
telescope!

What profit if this scientific age
Burst through our gates with all its retinue
Of modern miracles! Can it assuage
One lover's breaking heart? what can it do
To make one life more beautiful, one day
More god-like in its period? but now the Age of
Clay

Returns in horrid cycle, and the earth
Hath borne again a noisy progeny
Of ignorant Titans, whose ungodly birth
Hurls them against the august hierarchy
Which sat upon Olympus, to the Dust
They have appealed, and to that barren arbiter
they must

Repair for judgment, let them, if they can,
From Natural Warfare and insensate Chance,
Create the new Ideal rule for man!

Methinks that was not my inheritance;
For I was nurtured otherwise, my soul
Passes from higher heights of life to a more
supreme goal.

Lo! while we spake the earth did turn away
Her visage from the God, and Hecate's boat
Rose silver-laden, till the jealous day
Blew all its torches out: I did not note
The waning hours, to young Endymions
Time's palsied fingers count in vain his rosary of
suns!—

Mark how the yellow iris wearily
Leans back its throat, as though it would be
kissed
By its false chamberer, the dragon-fly,
Who, like a blue vein on a girl's white wrist,
Sleeps on that snowy primrose of the night,
Which 'gins to flush with crimson shame, and die
beneath the light.

Come let us go, against the pallid shield
Of the wan sky the almond blossoms gleam,
The corn-crake nested in the unmown field
Answers its mate, across the misty stream
On fitful wing the startled curlews fly,
And in his sedgy bed the lark, for joy that Day
is nigh,

Scatters the pearlèd dew from off the grass,
In tremulous ecstasy to greet the sun,
Who soon in gilded panoply will pass
Forth from yon orange-curtained pavilion
Hung in the burning east, see, the red rim
O'ertops the expectant hills! it is the God! for
love of him

Already the shrill lark is out of sight,
Flooding with waves of song this silent dell,—
Ah! there is something more in that bird's flight
Than could be tested in a crucible!—
But the air freshens, let us go,—why soon
The woodmen will be here; how we have lived
this night of June!

ROSA MYSTICA.

REQUIESCAT.

Tread lightly, she is near
Under the snow,
Speak gently, she can hear
The daisies grow.

All her bright golden hair
Tarnished with rust,
She that was young and fair
Fallen to dust.

Lily-like, white as snow,
She hardly knew
She was a woman, so
Sweetly she grew.

Coffin-board, heavy stone,
Lie on her breast,
I vex my heart alone
She is at rest.

Peace, Peace, she cannot hear
Lyre or sonnet,
All my life's buried here,
Heap earth upon it.

SONNET.

ON HEARING THE DIES IRÆ SUNG IN THE
SISTINE CHAPEL.

Nay, Lord, not thus ! white lilies in the spring,
Sad olive-groves, or silver-breasted dove,
Teach me more clearly of Thy life and love
Than terrors of red flame and thundering.
The empurpled vines dear memories of Thee
bring :
A bird at evening flying to its nest,
Tells me of One who had no place of rest:
I think it is of Thee the sparrows sing.
Come rather on some autumn afternoon,
When red and brown are burnished on the
leaves,
And the fields echo to the gleaner's song,
Come when the splendid fullness of the moon
Looks down upon the rows of golden
sheaves,
And reap Thy harvest: we have waited long.

EASTER DAY.

The silver trumpets rang across the Dome :
The people knelt upon the ground with awe :
And borne upon the necks of men I saw,
Like some great God, the Holy Lord of Rome.
Priest-like he wore a robe more white than foam,
And, King-like swathed himself in royal red,
Three crowns of gold rose high upon his head:
In splendor and in light the Pope passed home.
My heart stole back across wide wastes of years
To one who wandered by a lonely sea,
And sought in vain for any place of rest :
“Foxes have holes, and every bird its nest,
I, only I, must wander wearily,
And bruise my feet, and drink wine salt with
tears.”

E TENEBRIS.

Come down, O Christ, and help me! reach
thy hand,
For I am drowning in a stormier sea
Than Simon on thy lake of Galilee.
The wine of life is spilt upon the sand,
My heart is in some famine-murdered land,
Whence all good things have perished utterly,
And well I know my soul in Hell must lie
If I this night before God's throne should stand.

“ He sleeps perchance, or rideth to the chase,
Like Baal, when his prophets howled that name
From morn to noon on Carmel's smitten height.”
Nay, peace, I shall behold before the night,
The feet of brass, the robe more white than
flame,
The wounded hands, the weary human face.

MADONNA MIA.

A *Lily-girl*, not made for this world's pain,
With brown, soft hair close braided by her ears,
And longing eyes half veiled by slumberous
tears,
Like bluest water seen through mists of rain;
Pale cheeks whereon no love hath left its stain,
Red underlip drawn in for fear of love,
And white throat, whiter than the silvered dove,
Through whose wane marble creeps one purple
vein.
Yet, though my lips shall praise her without
cease,
Even to kiss her feet I am not bold,
Being o'ershadowed by the wings of awe.
Like Dante, when he stood with Beatrice
Beneath the flaming Lion's breast and saw
The seventh Crystal, and the Stair of Gold.

THE NEW HELEN.

Where hast thou been since round the walls of Troy
The sons of God fought in that great emprise?
Why dost thou walk our common earth again?
Hast thou forgotten that impassioned boy,
His purple galley and his Tyrian men
And treacherous Aphrodite's mocking eyes?
For surely it was thou, who, like a star
Hung in the silver silence of the night,
Didst lure the Old World's chivalry and might
Into the clamorous crimson waves of war!

.

The lotos-leaves which heal the wounds of Death
Lie in thy hand; O, be thou kind to me,
While yet I know the summer of my days;
For hardly can my tremulous lips draw breath
To fill the silver trumpet with thy praise,
So bowed am I before thy mystery;
So bowed and broken on Love's terrible wheel,
That I have lost all hope and heart to sing,
Yet care I not what ruin time may bring
If in thy temple thou wilt let me kneel.

.

O Helen! Helen! Helen! yet awhile;
Yet for a little while, O tarry here,
Till the dawn cometh and the shadows flee!

For in the gladsome sunlight of thy smile
Of heaven or hell I have no thought or fear,
Seeing I know no other god but thee:
No other god save him, before whose feet
In nets of gold the tired planets move,
The incarnate spirit of spiritual love
Who in thy body holds his joyous seat.

Thou wert not born as common women are!
But, girt with silver splendor of the foam,
Didst from the depths of sapphire seas arise
And at thy coming some immortal star,
Bearded with flame, blazed in the Eastern sky
And waked the shepherds on thine island home
Thou shalt not die: no asps of Egypt creep
Close at thy heels to taint the delicate air;
No sullen-blooming poppies stain thy hair,
Those scarlet heralds of eternal sleep.

Lily of love, pure and inviolate!
Tower of ivory! red rose of fire!
Thou hast come down our darkness to illumine
For we, close-caught in the wide nets of Fate,
Wearied with waiting for the World's Desire
Aimlessly wandered in the house of gloom
Aimlessly sought some slumberous anodyne
For wasted lives, for lingering wretchedness,
Till we beheld thy re-arisen shrine,
And the white glory of thy loveliness.

THE BURDEN OF ITYS.

This English Thames is holier far than Rome,
Those harebells like a sudden flush of sea
Breaking across the woodland, with the foam
Of meadow-sweet and white anemone
To fleck their blue waves,—God is likelier there,
Than hidden in that crystal-hearted star the pale
monks bear!

Those violet-gleaming butterflies that take
Yon creamy lily for their pavilion
Are monsignores, and where the rushes shake
A lazy pike lies basking in the sun
His eyes half-shut,—He is some mitered old
Bishop *in partibus!* look at those gaudy scales
all green and gold.

.

Sweet is the swallow twittering on the eaves
At daybreak, when the mower whets his scythe,
And stock-doves murmur, and the milkmaid leaves
Her little lonely bed, and carols blithe
To see the heavy-lowing cattle wait
Stretching their huge and dripping mouths across
the farmyard gate.

And sweet the hops upon the Kentish leas,
And sweet the wind that lifts the new-mown hay,
And sweet the fretful swarms of grumbling bees
That round and round the linden blossoms play;
And sweet the heifer breathing in the stall,
And the green bursting figs that hang upon the
red-brick wall.

And sweet to hear the cuckoo mock the spring
While the last violet loiters by the well,
And sweet to hear the shepherd Daphnis sing
The song of Linus through a sunny dell
Of warm Arcadia where the corn is gold
And the slight lithe-limbed reapers dance about
the wattled fold.

And sweet with young Lycoris to recline
In some Illyrian valley far away,
Where canopied on herbs amaracine
We too might waste the summer-trancèd day
Matching our reeds in sportive rivalry,
While far beneath us frets the troubled purple
of the sea.

But sweeter far if silver-sandaled foot
Of some long-hidden god should ever tread
The Nuneham meadows, if with reeded flute
Pressed to his lips some Faun might raise his
head
By the green water-flags, ah! sweet indeed
To see the heavenly herdsman call his white-
fleeced flock to feed.

.

Cry out aloud on Itys ! memory

That foster-brother of remorse and pain
Drops poison in mine ear—O to be free,

To burn one's old ships ! and to launch again
Into the white-plumed battle of the waves
And fight old Proteus for the spoil of coral-
flowered caves !

.

O for one midnight and as paramour

The Venus of the little Melian farm !

O that some antique statue for one hour

Might wake to passion, and that I could charm
The Dawn at Florence from its dumb despair
Mix with those mighty limbs and make that
giant breast my lair !

Sing on ! sing on ! I would be drunk with life,

Drunk with the trampled vintage of my youth,
I would forget the wearying wasted strife,

The riven vale, the Gorgon eyes of Truth,
The prayerless vigil and the cry for prayer,
The barren gifts, the lifted arms, the dull insen-
sate air !

Sing on ! sing on ! O feathered Niobe,

Thou canst make sorrow beautiful, and steal
From joy its sweetest music, not as we

Who by dead voiceless silence strive to heal
Our too untented wounds, and do but keep
Pain barricadoed in our hearts, and murder pil-
lowed sleep.

Sing louder yet, why must I still behold
The wan white face of that deserted Christ,
Whose bleeding hands my hands did once infold,
Whose smitten lips my lips so oft have kissed,
And now in mute and marble misery
Sits in his lone dishonored House and weeps,
perchance for me.

O memory cast down thy wreathèd shell !
Break thy hoarse lute O sad Melpomene !
O sorrow sorrow keep thy cloistered cell
Nor dim with tears this limpid Castaly !
Cease, cease, sad bird, thou dost the forest wrong
To vex its sylvan quiet with such wild impassioned
song !

Cease, cease, or if 'tis anguish to be dumb
Take from the pastoral thrush her simpler air,
Whose jocund carelessness doth more become
This English woodland than thy keen despair,
Ah ! cease and let the northwind bear thy lay
Back to the rocky hills of Thrace, the stormy
Daulian bay.

.

It was a dream, the glade is tenantless,
No soft Ionian laughter moves the air,
The Thames creeps on in sluggish leadenness,
And from the copse left desolate and bare
Fled is young Bacchus with his revelry,
Yet still from Nuneham wood there comes that
thrilling melody

So sad, that one might think a human heart
 Brake in each separate note, a quality
Which music sometimes has, being the Art
 Which is most nigh to tears and memory,
Poor mourning Philomel, what dost thou fear?
Thy sister dost not haunt these fields, Pandion is
 not here,

Here is no cruel Lord with murderous blade,
 No woven web of bloody heraldries,
But mossy dells for roving comrades made,
 Warm valleys where the tired student lies
With half-shut book, and many a winding walk
Where rustic lovers stray at eve in happy simple talk.

.

The heron passes homeward to the mere,
 The blue mist creeps among the shivering trees,
Gold world by world the silent stars appear,
 And like a blossom blown before the breeze,
A white moon drifts across the shimmering sky,
Mute arbitress of all thy sad, thy rapturous threnody.

She does not heed thee, wherefore should she heed,
 She knows Endymion is not far away,
'Tis I, 'tis I, whose soul is as the reed
 Which has no message of its own to play,
So pipes another's bidding, it is I,
Drifting with every wind on the wide sea of misery.

Ah! the brown bird has ceased : one exquisite
About the somber woodland seems to cling
Dying in music, else the air is still,
So still that one might hear the bat's small w
Wander and wheel above the pines, or tell
Each tiny dewdrop dripping from the blue-be
brimming cell.

And far away across the lengthening wold,
Across the willowy flats and thickets brown
Magdalen's tall tower tipped with tremulous g
Marks the long High Street of the little tov
And warns me to return ; I must not wait,
Hark ! 'tis the curfew booming from the bell
Christ Church gate.

SERENADE.

FOR MUSIC.

The western wind is blowing fair
Across the dark Ægean sea,
And at the secret marble stair
My Tyrian galley waits for thee.
Come down! the purple sail is spread,
The watchman sleeps within the town,
O leave thy lily-flowered bed,
O Lady mine come down, come down

She will not come, I know her well,
Of lover's vows she hath no care,
And little good a man can tell
Of one so cruel and so fair.
True love is but a woman's toy,
They never know the lover's pain,
And I who loved as loves a boy
Must love in vain, must love in vain.

O noble pilot tell me true
Is that the sheen of golden hair?
Or is it but the tangled dew
That binds the passion-flowers there?
Good sailor come and tell me now
Is that my lady's lily hand?
Or is it but the gleaming prow,
Or is it but the silver sand?

No! no! 'tis not the tangled dew,
 'Tis not the silver-fretted sand,
It is my own dear Lady true
 With golden hair and lily hand!
O noble pilot steer for Troy,
 Good sailor ply the laboring oar,
This is the Queen of life and joy
 Whom we must bear from Grecian shore!

The waning sky grows faint and blue,
 It wants an hour still of day,
Aboard! aboard! my gallant crew,
 O Lady mine away! away!
O noble pilot steer for Troy,
 Good sailor ply the laboring oar,
O loved as only loves a boy!
 O loved for ever evermore!

LA BELLA DONNA DELLA
MIA MENTE.

My limbs are wasted with a flame,
My feet are sore with traveling,
For calling on my Lady's name
My lips have now forgot to sing.

O Linnet in the wild-rose brake
Strain for my Love thy melody,
O Lark sing louder for love's sake,
My gentle Lady passeth by.

She is too fair for any man
To see or hold his heart's delight,
Fairer than Queen or courtezan
Or moon-lit water in the night.

Her hair is bound with myrtle leaves,
(Green leaves upon her golden hair!)
Green grasses through the yellow sheaves
Of autumn corn are not more fair.

Her little lips, more made to kiss
Than to cry bitterly for pain,
Are tremulous as brook-water is,
roses after evening rain.

Her neck is like white melilote
Flushing for pleasure of the sun,
The throbbing of the linnet's throat
Is not so sweet to look upon.

As a pomegranate, cut in twain,
White-seeded, is her crimson mouth,
Her cheeks are as the fading stain
Where the peach reddens to the south.

O twining hands ! O delicate
White body made for love and pain !
O House of love ! O desolate
Pale flower beaten by the rain !

THE GRAVE OF KEATS.

Rid of the world's injustice, and his pain,
He rests at last beneath God's veil of blue :
Taken from life when life and love were new
The youngest of the martyrs here is lain,
Fair as Sebastian, and as early slain.
No cypress shade his grave, no funeral yew,
But gentle violets weeping with the dew
Weave on his bones an ever blossoming chain.
O proudest heart that broke for misery !
O sweetest lips since those of Mitylene !
O poet-painter of our English Land !
Thy name was writ in water——it shall stand :
And tears like mine will keep thy memory green,
As Isabella did her Basil-tree.

IN THE GOLD ROOM.

A HARMONY.

Her ivory hands on the ivory keys
 Strayed in a fitful fantasy,
Like the silver gleam with the poplar trees
 Rustle their pale leaves listlessly,
Or the drifting foam of a restless sea
When the waves show their teeth in the flyin
 breeze.

Her gold hair fell on the wall of gold
 Like the delicate gossamer tangles spun
On the burnished disk of the marigold,
 Or the sun-flower turning to meet the sun
 When the gloom of the jealous night is dor
And the spear of the lily is aureoled.

And her sweet red lips on these lips of mine
 Burned like the ruby fire set
In the swinging lamp of a crimson shrine,
 Or the bleeding wounds of the pomegrana
 Or the heart of the lotus drenched and we
With the spilt-out blood of the rose-red win

THE GRAVE OF SHELLEY.

Like burnt-out torches by a sick man's bed
Gaunt cypress trees stand round the sun-
bleached stone ;

Here doth the little night-owl make her throne,
And the slight lizard show his jeweled head.
And, where the chaliced poppies flame to red,
In the still chamber of yon pyramid
Surely some Old-World Sphinx lurks darkly hid
Grim warder of this plesaunce of the dead.

Ah! sweet indeed to rest within the womb
Of Earth, great mother of eternal sleep,
But sweeter far for thee a restless tomb
In the blue cavern of an echoing deep,
Or where the tall ships founder in the gloom
Against the rocks of some wave-shattered steep.

ROME.

IMPRESSION DU VOYAGE.

The sea was sapphire colored, and the sky
Burned like a heated opal through the air,
We hoisted sail ; the wind was blowing fair
For the blue lands that to the eastward lie.
From the steep prow I marked with quickening eye
Zakynthos, every olive grove and creek,
Ithaca's cliff, Lycaon's snowy peak,
And all the flower-strewn hills of Arcady.
The flapping of the sail against the mast,
The ripple of the water on the side,
The ripple of girl's laughter at the stern,
The only sounds :—when 'gan the West to burn,
And a red sun upon the seas to ride,
I stood upon the soil of Greece at last!

PANTHEA.

Nay, let us walk from fire unto fire,
From passionate pain to deadlier delight,—
I am too young to live without desire,
Too young art thou to waste this summer night
Asking those idle questions which of old
Man sought of seer and oracle, and reply was told.

For, sweet, to feel is better than to know,
And wisdom is a childless heritage,
One pulse of passion—youth's first fiery glow,—
Are worth the hoarded proverbs of the sage:
Vex not thy soul with dead philosophy,
Have we not lips to kiss with, hearts to love, and
eyes to see!

Dost thou not hear the murmuring nightingale
Like water bubbling from a silver jar,
So soft she sings the envious moon is pale,
That high in heaven she is hung so far
She cannot hear that love-enraptured tune,—
Mark how she wreathes each horn with mist, yon
late and laboring moon.

White lilies, in whose cups the gold bees dream,
The fallen snow of petals where the breeze
Scatters the chestnut blossom, or the gleam

Of boyish limbs in water,—are not these
Enough for thee, dost thou desire more?
Alas! the Gods will give naught else from their
eternal store.

For our high Gods have sick and wearied grown
Of all our endless sins, our vain endeavor
For wasted days of youth to make atone
By pain or prayer or priest, and never, never,
Hearken they now to either good or ill,
But send their rain upon the just and the unjust at v
· · · · ·

Alas! they know the far Lethæan spring,
The violet-hidden waters well they know,
Where one whose feet with tired wandering
Are faint and broken may take heart and go,
And from those dark depths cool and crystalline
Drink, and draw balm, and sleep for sleepless so
and anodyne.

But we oppress our natures, God or Fate
Is our enemy, we starve and feed
On vain repentance—O we are born too late!
What balm for us in bruised poppy seed
Who crowd into one finite pulse of time
The joy of infinite love and the fierce pain of infi-
crime.

O we are wearied of this sense of guilt,
Wearied of pleasure's paramour despair,
Wearied of every temple we have built,
Wearied of every right, unanswered prayer,
For man is weak; God sleeps: and heaven is high:
One fiery-colored moment: one great love; and lo!
we die.

.

This hot hard flame with which our bodies burn
Will make some meadow blaze with daffodil,
Ay! and those argent breasts of thine will turn
To water-lillies; the brown fields men till
Will be more fruitful for our love to-night,
Nothing is lost in nature, all things live in Death's
despite.

The boy's first kiss, the hyacinths first bell,
The man's last passion, and the last red spear
That from the lily leaps, the asphodel
Which will not let its blossoms blow for fear
Of too much beauty, and the timid shame
Of the young bridegroom at his lover's eyes,—these
with the same

One sacrament are consecrate, the earth
Not we alone hath passions hymeneal,
The yellow buttercups that shake from mirth
At daybreak know a pleasure not less real
Than we do, when in some fresh blossoming wood
We draw the spring into our hearts, and feel that
life is good.

Ay! had we never loved at all, who knows
If yonder daffodil had lured the bee
Into its gilded womb, or any rose
Had hung with crimson lamps its little tree!
Methinks no leaf would ever bud in spring,
But for the lovers' lips that kiss, the poets' lips
that sing.

Is the light vanished from our golden sun,
Or is this dædal-fashioned earth less fair,
That we are nature's heritors, and one
With every pulse of life that beats the air?
Rather new suns across the sky shall pass,
New splendor come unto the flower, new glory
to the grass.

And we two lovers shall not sit afar,
Critics of nature, but the joyous sea
Shall be our raiment, and the bearded 'star
Shoots arrows at our pleasure! We shall be
Part of the mighty universal whole,
And through all æons mix and mingle with the
Kosmic Soul!

We shall be notes in that great Symphony
Whose cadence circles through the rhythmic
spheres,
And all the live World's throbbing heart shall be
One with our heart, the stealthy creeping years
Have lost their terrors now, we shall not die,
The Universe itself shall be our Immortality!

QUIA MULTUM AMAVI.

Dear Heart I think the young impassioned priest
When first he takes from out the hidden shrine
His God imprisoned in the Eucharist,
And eats the bread, and drinks the dreadful wine,

Feels not such awful wonder as I felt
When first my smitten eyes beat full on thee,
And all night long before thy feet I knelt
Till thou wert wearied of Idolatry.

Ah! had'st thou liked me less and loved me more,
Through all those summer days of joy and rain,
I had not now been sorrow's heritor,
Or stood a lackey in the House of Pain.

Yet, though remorse, youth's white-faced seneschal
Tread on my heels with all his retinue,
I am most glad I loved thee—think of all
The suns that go to make one speedwell blue!

SILENTIUM AMORIS.

As oftentimes the too resplendent sun
Hurries the pallid and reluctant moon
Back to her somber cave, ere she hath won
A single ballad from the nightingale,
So doth thy Beauty make my lips to fail,
And all my sweetest singing out of tune.

And as at dawn across the level mead
On wings impetuous some wind will come,
And with its too harsh kisses break the reed
Which was its only instrument of song,
So my too stormy passions work me wrong,
And for excess of Love my Love is dumb.

But surely unto Thee mine eyes did show
Why I am silent, and my lute unstrung ;
Else it were better we should part, and go,
Thou to some lips of sweeter melody,
And I to nurse the barren memory
Of unknissed kisses, and songs never sung.

HER VOICE.

The wild bee reels from bough to bough
With his furry coat and his gauzy wing.
Now in a lily-cup, and now
Setting a jacinth bell a-swing,
In his wandering;
Sit closer love : it was here I trow
I made that vow,

Swore that two lives should be like one
As long as the sea-gull loved the sea,
As long as the sunflower sought the sun—
It shall be, I said, for eternity
'Twixt you and me !
Dear friend, those times are over and done,
Love's web is spun.

Look upward where the poplar trees
Sway and sway in the summer air,
Here in the valley never a breeze
Scatters the thistledown, but there
Great winds blow fair
From the mighty murmuring mystical seas,
And the wave-lashed leas.

Look upward where the white gull screams,
What does it see that we do not see?
Is that a star ? or the lamp that gleams

On some outward voyaging argosy,—
Ah ! can it be
We have lived our lives in land of dreams !
How sad it seems.

Sweet, there is nothing left to say
But this, that love is never lost,
Keen winter stabs the breasts of May
Whose crimson roses burst his frost,
Ships tempest-tossed
We find a harbor in some bay,
And so we may.

And there is nothing left to do
But to kiss once again and part,
Nay, there is nothing we should rue,
I have my beauty,—you your Art,
Nay, do not start,
One world was not enough for two
Like me and you.

MY VOICE.

Within this restless, hurried modern world
We took our hearts full pleasure—You and I,
And now the white sails of our ship are furled,
And spent the lading of our argosy.

Wherefor my cheeks before their time are wan,
For very weeping is my gladness fled,
Sorrow hath paled my lip's vermilion,
And Ruin draws the curtain of my bed.

But all this crowded life has been to thee
No more than lyre, or lute, or subtle spell
Of viols, or the music of the sea
That sleeps, a mimic echo, in the shell.

HUMAN TIDE.

.
There was a time when any common bird
 Could make me sing in unison, a time
When all the strings of boyish life were stirred
 To quick response or more melodious rhyme
By every forest idyll;—do I change?
Or rather doth some evil thing through thy fair
 pleasaunce range?

.

Thou art the same: 'tis I whose wretched soul
 Takes discontent to be its paramour,
And gives its kingdom to the rude control
 Of what should be its servitor,—for sure
Wisdom is somewhere, though the stormy sea
Contain it not, and the huge deep answer “ 'Tis
 not in me.”

.

The minor chord which ends the harmony,
 And for its answering brother waits in vain,
Sobbing for incompleated melody
 Dies a Swan's death; but I the heir of pain
A silent Memnon with blank lidless eyes
Wait for the light and music of those suns
 which never rise.

.

More barren—ay, those arms will never lean
Down through the trellised vines and draw my
soul

In sweet reluctance through the tangled green;
Some other head must wear that aureole,
For I am Hers who loves not any man
Whose white and stainless bosom bears the
sign Gorgonian.

.

O for one grand unselfish simple life
To teach us what is Wisdom! speak ye hills
Of lone Helvellyn, for this note of strife
Shunned your untroubled crags and crystal
rills,
Where is that spirit which living blamelessly
Yet dared to kiss the smitten mouth of his own
century!

.

Sweet I blame you not for mine the fault was, had
I not been made of common clay
I had climbed the higher heights unclimbed yet,
seen the fuller air, the larger day.

From the wildness of my wasted passion I had
struck a better, clearer song,
Lit some lighter light of freer freedom, battled with
some Hydra-headed wrong.

Had my lips been smitten into music by the kisses
that but made them bleed,
You had walked with Bice and the angels on that
verdant and enameled mead.

I had trod the road which Dante treading saw the
suns of seven circles shine,
Ay! perchance had seen the heavens opening, as
they opened to the Florentine.

And the mighty nations would have crowned me,
who am crownless now and without name,
And some orient dawn had found me kneeling on
the threshold of the House of Fame.

I had sat within that marble circle where the oldest
bard is as the young,
And the pipe is ever dropping honey, and the lyre's
strings are ever strung.

Keats had lifted up his hymenæal curls from out
the poppy-seeded wine,
With ambrosial mouth had kissed my forehead,
clasped the hand of noble love in mine.

And at springtide, when the apple-blossoms brush
the burnished bosom of the dove,
Two young lovers lying in an orchard would have
read the story of our love.

Would have have read the legend of my passion,
know the bitter secret of my heart,
Kissed as we have kissed, but never parted as we
two are fated now to part.

For the crimson flower of our life is eaten by the
cankerworm of truth,
And no hand can gather up the fallen withered
petals of the rose of youth.

Yet I am not sorry that I loved you—ah! what else
had I a boy to do,—
For the hungry teeth of time devour, and the silent-
footed years pursue.

Rudderless, we drift athwart a tempest, and when
once the storm of youth is past,
Without lyre, without lute or chorus, Death a silent
pilot comes at last.

And within the grave there is no pleasure, for the
blind-worm battens on the root,
And Desire shudders into ashes, and the tree of
Passion bears no fruit.

Ah! what else had I to do but love you, God's own
mother was less dear to me,
And less dear the Cytheræan rising like an argent
lily from the sea.

I have made my choice, have lived my poems, and,
though youth is gone in wasted days,
I have found the lover's crown of myrtle better than
the poet's crown of bays.

TÆDIUM VITÆ.

To stab my youth with desperate knives, to wear
This paltry age's gaudy livery,
To let each base hand filch my treasury,
To mesh my soul within a woman's hair,
To be mere Fortune's lackeyed groom,—I swear
I love it not! these things are less to me
Than the thin foam that frets upon the sea,
Less than the thistle-down of summer air
Which hath no seed: better to stand aloof
Far from these slanderous fools who mock my
life
Knowing me not, better the lowliest roof
Fit for the meanest hind to sojourn in,
Than to go back to that hoarse cave of strife
Where my white soul first kissed the mouth of
sin.

APOLOGIA.

Is it thy will that I should wax and wane,
Barter my cloth of gold for hodden gray,
And at thy pleasure weave that web of pain
Whose brightest threads are each a wasted day?

Is it thy will—Love that I love so well—
That my Soul's House should be a tortured spot
Wherein, like evil paramours, must dwell
The quenchless flame, the worm that dieth not?

Nay, if it be thy will I shall endure,
And sell ambition at the common mart,
And let dull failure be my vestiture,
And sorrow dig its grave within my heart.

Perchance it may be better so—at least
I have not made my heart a heart of stone,
Nor starved my boyhood of its goodly feast,
Nor walked where Beauty is a thing unknown.

Many a man hath done so; sought to fence
In straitened bonds the soul that should be free,
Trodden the dusty road of common sense,
While all the forest sang of liberty,

Not marking how the spotted hawk in flight
Passed on wide pinion through the lofty air,
To where the steep untrodden mountain height
Caught the last tresses of the Sun God's hair.

Or how the little flower he trod upon,
The daisy, that white-feathered shield of gold,
Followed with wistful eyes the wandering sun
Content if once its leaves were aureoled.

But surely it is something to have been
The best beloved for a little while,
To have walked hand in hand with Love, and seen
His purple wings flit once across thy smile.

Ah! though the gorgèd asp of passion feed
On my boy's heart, yet have I burst the bars,
Stood face to face with Beauty, known indeed
The Love which moves the Sun and all the stars !

my time

Aug 30. 11

OSCAR WILDE'S AUTOGRAPH MANUSCRIPTS of twelve of his works brought a total of \$3,460 at Sotheby's in London a few days ago. None

Oscar Wilde's Tardy Epigrams

of them was complete. The fullest piece was sixty pages of "The Soul of Man Under Socialism," which was published in The Fortnightly Review, February, 1891. This was the copy used by the printers and shows Wilde's method of composition. Many of the epigrams were evidently incorporated after the first draft of the article. The following sentences, for example, were inserted:

There is only one class in the community that thinks more about money than the rich, and that is the poor. The poor can think of nothing else. That is the misery of being poor.

The following sentence was deleted:

With regard to the Bible * * * there has always seemed to me to be a conspiracy among curates to conceal its beauty, and a dogged determination amongst congregations not to notice it.

In three chapters of "Dorian Gray" the following insertions occur:

Philanthropic people lose all sense of humanity; it is their distinguishing characteristic.

The way of paradoxes is the way of truth; to test reality one must see it on the tight-rope.

An early draft of Wilde's poem, "The Sphinx," was perhaps the most interesting of all these manuscripts. Many of the stanzas are incomplete; others were suppressed before the final version. A list of rhymes, "far, tar, star, car, jar, mar, bazaar," is written down, as is also the phrase "like shadowy mezzotints." There also occur the lines:

O blue-bell, ring the belted bees
Back to their yellow house of straw.

The stanza, which, later on, read as follows,

For you the monstrous crocodile,
That was a god, wept sliding tears,
And tore the jewels from his ears
To lure you back to reedy Nile,

is thus incompletely sketched:

For you the little dappled deers
Were slain at —, while
For you the monstrous crocodile
Tore out the jewels from his ears.

"The Sphinx" was published in 1894, the same year that the original version of Wilde's "Salome" was produced in Paris by Sarah Bernhardt.

